Dr. Tyler Lefevor's Featured Publication Spotlight

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How does this publication fit into your line of research/inquiry?

The study emerged from conversations with sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) who talked about the different ways that religiousness was helpful or harmful for them. Other work I have done has suggested that SGMs have a variety of experiences with religiousness; however, I did not see that articulated often in the literature. Rather, I primarily heard a narrative that religiousness was harmful for SGMs in much of the research I read. This study set out to investigate how true that narrative was and ultimately found that the relationship between religiousness and health among SGMs is much more nuanced than we typically discuss.

What makes this publication special?

Psychological Bulletin is the highest-ranking journal in psychology, which means that the potential reach of this publication is much wider than other work that I have done. The aims of this publication were to challenge commonly-held narratives about the role of religiousness in the lives of sexual and gender minorities, so publishing in such a wide-reaching journal means that our work is much more likely to be effective challenging these narratives.

How were students and colleagues involved in this publication?

Two of my students were coauthors because of their work gathering the studies for the meta-analysis and coding them. These students were fundamental in setting the stage for the analysis to summarize a broad area of research. I also worked with a friend at Wheaton College, Ward Davis, who was fundamental in conceptualizing the study and articulating the theoretical framework behind it.

What are the ripple effects from this publication?

This study encourages researchers to explore narratives of harm, benefit, and no effect when discussing the relationship between religiousness and health among SGMs. By doing so, researchers, therapists, and concerned individuals can more clearly understand the diverse experiences of SGMs with religiousness. It also points out key methodological flaws in much research that has been done with SGMs—because these studies have sampled individuals from SGM communities, the resulting samples have systematically over-reported the harmful effects of current religiousness on health, narratives which are less prevalent in random samples of SGMs.

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